

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2715

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, ET
SUBJECT: PMGSE SEMINAR ON ERITREA

1. WHAT HAS BEEN BILLED AS A "SEMINAR" TO TRY "TO
RESOLVE SCIENTIFICALLY THE PROBLEM IN THE ERITREA
REGION" WAS OPENED BY PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRA-
TIVE COUNCIL (PMAC OR DIRG) SECRETARY GENERAL CAPT.
FIKRE-SELASSIE WOGDERESS JUNE 16.

2. THE SEMINAR IS SCHEDULED TO LAST FOR TEN DAYS
AND INVOLVES OVER 800 PERSONS DRAWN FROM THE DIRG
AND THE GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES OF
MASS ORGANIZATIONS (WORKERS, PEASANTS, URBAN DWELLERS
AND OTHERS). ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADORS OR CHARGES FROM
NAIROBI, ROME, BELGRADE, BONN, STOCKHOLM, ATHENS,
LONDON, LAGOS, PARIS AND WASHINGTON WERE RECALLED TO
ATTEND THE SEMINAR AND DID RETURN.

3. THERE ARE TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ON THE DIRG'S
PURPOSE BEHIND ORGANIZING THE SEMINAR. ONE, RE-
PORTED ON SOME WESTERN RADIO REPORTS, SUGGESTS THAT
THE DIRG IS CONSIDERING WAYS SHORT OF MILITARY
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CONQUEST TO END THE REBELLION IN ERITREA. TO THIS
END, IT IS PREPARING THE GROUND FOR A SHIFT IN
ITS PREVIOUSLY UNCOMPROMISING POSITION BASED ON THE
TWO-YEAR OLD NINE POINT PROGRAM. WE HAVE NO REASON
TO BELIEVE THIS EXPLANATION.

4. THE SECOND, AND IN OUR VIEW MORE LIKELY EXPLANA-

TION BEHIND THE SEMINAR, IS AN ATTEMPT BY THE DIRG TO LINE UP SUPPORT FROM ALL QUARTERS FOR ITS PRESENT POLICY OF A MILITARY SOLUTION TO END THE ERITREAN REBELLION. IN THIS VIEW, THE MILITARY GOING WILL BE LONG AND COSTLY AND EVEN THE FINAL OUTCOME IS NOT CERTAIN. THEREFORE, THE DIRG WANTS TO ASSOCIATE AS MANY LEADERS OF MASS ORGANIZATIONS WITH ITS POLICY IN ORDER TO AVOID CRITICISM WHEN THE GOING GETS HARD. A COMPLEMENTARY REASON FOR THE SEMINAR IS TO DECIDE ON A COORDINATED PUBLIC LINE TO EXPLAIN THE DIRG'S POLICY. THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR EXPLANATIONS IN WESTERN-ORIENTED COUNTRIES OF THE FORTHCOMING MILITARY OFFENSIVE. WE NOTE THAT NO ETHIOPIAN CHIEFS OF MISSION TO SOVIET BLOC COUNTRIES WERE RECALLED TO ATTEND THIS SEMINAR.

5. AS A SIDE EFFECT OF THE SEMINAR, IT WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO LOCATE MANY OF OUR FOREIGN MINISTRY CONTACTS WHO ARE ATTENDING UNTIL THE LAST SESSION.
MATHERON

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